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Secretary of State Alex Padilla Partners with Equality California Institute to Protect Voting Rights of Transgender Californians in 2020

Partnership Will Include Best Practices Training for Poll Workers, 'Know Your Rights' Content for Voters, Targeted Get Out the Vote and 2020 Census Outreach

Padilla to Announce Partnership at 1pm Today in San Francisco at 'Fair Share for Equality' LGBTQ Policy Convening, Media Availability at 12:50pm

SAN FRANCISCO — With 130 days until California's March 3, 2020 Presidential Primary Election, Secretary of State Alex Padilla will announce today at Equality California Institute's annual Fair Share for Equality policy convening that he will partner with the civil rights organization to protect transgender and gender-nonconforming voters' access to the ballot box and boost LGBTQ civic engagement in 2020. Equality California Institute is the educational arm of Equality California, the nation's largest statewide LGBTQ civil rights organization.

Specifically, the partnership will include:

- The development and distribution of training materials to county registrars that promote best practices for poll workers to engage with voters whose gender identity, expression or pronouns do not appear to match their name on the voter rolls;
- The development of content such as brochures, posters and digital media to inform transgender and gender-nonconforming voters of their rights;
- Targeted nonpartisan 'Get Out the Vote' communications and 2020 census outreach efforts to increase civic participation within the LGBTQ community.

"Every eligible voter has a right to cast a ballot free from any unnecessary burdens or intimidation," said Secretary of State Alex Padilla. "Elections officials have a duty to facilitate the participation of all eligible voters. By partnering with Equality California we can benefit from their expertise and experience to better train poll workers and ensure a welcoming voting environment for LGBTQ citizens. California is proud to be proactive in protecting the voting rights of LGBTQ voters and fostering an inclusive democracy."

The Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law estimates approximately 0.76% of Californians — or 218,400 people — identify as transgender. Based on the overall numbers of eligible and

registered California voters as of February 2019, that means there are likely at least 190,000 eligible voters and 150,000 registered voters statewide who identify as transgender.

“No one should be denied the right to vote because of their gender identity or expression — and there’s certainly too much at stake next year to let that happen in California,” said Equality California Institute Executive Director Rick Zbur. “While other states impose strict, unnecessary voter ID laws targeting people of color and the LGBTQ community, California is making sure every single eligible voter has a chance to cast a ballot. We’re grateful to Secretary Padilla for his leadership and partnership in the fight to protect access to the ballot box and advance LGBTQ civil rights.”

In most cases, California voters are not required to show identification to a poll worker before casting a ballot. Still, many transgender and gender-nonconforming voters may be registered and appear on the voter roll under a name that does not appear to “match” their gender identity, expression or the name and pronouns that they use. Additionally, Californians voting for the first time after registering to vote by mail, who did not provide a driver's license number, state identification number or the last four digits of their social security number on their registration form, may be asked to show a form of identification when going to the polls. In these cases, voters' names and gender markers on their form of identification may not appear to “match” their gender identity, expression or the name and pronouns that they use.

If all other legal requirements are met, a transgender or gender-nonconforming person is entitled to vote just like any other person, regardless of their gender identity or expression. If poll workers aren't given the tools and training that they need to respectfully engage with transgender and gender-nonconforming voters, tens of thousands of California voters could be at risk of being disenfranchised. The partnership announced Friday seeks to ensure that does not happen in the State of California.

